In December of 2012, there was a shocking case of winery vandalism. It occurred near Tuscany Italy, where nearly 80,000 bottles, upwards of 15 million dollars of fine wine was poured down the drain in the middle of the night. The rest of the winery was left undamaged according to the reporting papers. It was suspected and later confirmed as vandalism when one former employee confessed to the crime - allegedly as revenge for premiere lodging being given to another employee, then subsequently being fired by his boss for an outburst over his perceived poor treatment. Regardless of how much about the culprits motives are true or untrue, it brings up an interesting issue: ethics and the code of conduct in the wine world. Sabotage is not a highly documented problem for the wine industry, but even anecdotal reports of vine or wine sabotage - is enough to ask the question - what is the state of ethics for workers in the wine industry?

Wine workers have a fairly clean record when it comes to ethics, and the industry as a whole is considered to be ethical. However, as the Italian case demonstrates, disagreements and issues amongst wine makers, their employees, and their competitors do occur - and the stakes are high. Yes, the objective is to make great wine, and through that make money - but that does not mean it can't be done ethically.

As it stands now, wineries are generally left to their own methods and processes when it comes to ethical behavior of employees and managers within their winery. This paper aims at addressing the ethical needs and relationships of the wine manufacturers, their managers, their employees, and their competitors; but will also briefly examine the place for ethics at all levels in the industry.
The discussion will be a great benefit to the wine world, not only in the managerial sense, but also a positive step in the eyes of the public, and before the public forces regulations on the industry following a scandal. After a scandal, the public would likely be less favorable to the industry. For example, think of the public reaction after a food safety scare. The paper will first examine current wine industry regulations, from local to national regulations, and where those may or may not fall short of meeting the ethical needs of the industry and workers.

It is helpful to know what we mean when we say ethics. Webster's dictionary defines ethics as "the principles of conduct governing an individual or a group". That is a good place to start, and this essay will use variations of this basic concept to come up with a useful professional ethic for wine-workers and managers. Ethics by employees apply both to operations in the winery and to customer service.

Finally, this paper will put forward ethical training and education for wine workers in ethical conduct as well as suggest potential ethical models that could be implemented uniformly across the industry. This would benefit current workers, as well as providing a basic standard for new workers entering the industry. These models may come from elsewhere in the food or beverage industry, and will be adapted to fit the specific needs and characteristics of the wine industry both domestically and internationally.

The paper is not a criticism of the ethics of wine producers and workers. As mentioned earlier, the industry is generally considered to be ethical, and has few problems with such issues - making now the best time to examine and implement standards for ethical behavior and thought. We will provide a basic policy that the industry can use to self-regulate and grow with. Abiding by a set of ethical standards has the potential of reducing or even preventing disasters like a disgruntled employees sabotage, or damage to public image. The goal is to create a model that
the industry and its workers can benefit from, that can grow as the industry grows, and prevent
ethical problems before they occur. It is simply a matter of examination and training to meet this
need.